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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~ CONFIDENTIAL

COUNTRY Cuba/Nicaragua

REPORT NO. OO-A 3,170,529

SUBJECT Orestes Del Rio, Captain, Air Force; Anti-Castro

DATE DISTR. 4 November 1960

NO. PAGES 2

REFERENCES

DATE OF INFO. To Mid-Aug 60

PLACE & DATE ACQ. Throughout Cuba/To Mid-Aug 60

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE US national; former non-commissioned officer in the US Marine Corps.

Source is a 23 year old ex-Marine who spent the period from February 1959 through July 1960 serving in the Cuban Army and the Cuban Air Force. He obtained his discharge from the Cuban Air Force in June 1960 and returned to the US via Mexico City on 30 Aug 60. According to source, he had been nominated by the Marine Corps to enroll in the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps at a US university, even though he had not finished his high-school education. He reportedly did not accept this offer because he was much more interested in Special Forces type activity, and this led to his decision to leave the Marine Corps and a short time later to enlist in the Cuban Army. He appears to be a keen observer. While source's plans are indefinite, he should be available for further interview during the next few weeks (mid-October - November 1960).

1. During my tour of duty in the Cuban Air Force (December 1959 - June 1960), I was stationed at San Julian Air Force Base in western Pinar del Rio province. I served there as the nominal second in command (although my actual rank was that of sergeant) under Capt Orestes Del Rio, Chief of the San Julian Air Base. In view of the informal relationships existing in the Cuban Air Force, I became quite close to Capt Del Rio.

2. This man was, and I believe still is, a captain in the Cuban Air Force. He is qualified to fly T-33, F-47, F-51 and AT-6 aircraft. When Pedro Diaz Lanz became Chief of the Air Force, Del Rio was named Commander of the San Antonio de los Baños Air Force Base. He is a very intelligent man, but he does not like routine work and has a tendency to "goof off". As a consequence, he was transferred and became Chief of the San Julian Air Base in western Pinar del Rio.

3. While located at San Julian he befriended three Nicaraguan pilots, all 1st Lts, Cuban Air Force, Ernesto Guerrero, Pedro Ulloa, and FNU Calo, and became interested in a movement to overthrow the present government of Nicaragua. Del Rio protested vigorously to Maj Sergio Del Valle, present Chief of the Air Force when the Nicaraguan pilots Ulloa and Guerrero were detained in January 1960. These two Nicaraguans allegedly were involved in a conspiracy with the local Captain of the San Julian militia [not further identified] in a planned expedition to invade Nicaragua. Del Rio was transferred in February 1960 to the new airport then under construction at Santa Clara, in Las Villas province.

4. In June 1960 Capt Del Rio again was transferred, this time to the T-33 training squadron at San Antonio de los Baños. There he completed a number of weeks of instruction under Capt Martin Klein, a US trained pilot who was sent to the US for training by the Batista regime, and Capt

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FNU Carreras, Squadron Chief. He was arrested along with 23 other Cuban Air Force pilots in mid-July 1960. These men were involved in an anti-Castro conspiracy to bomb the Havana, Santiago and Guantanamo areas, and some of them were involved in an expedition to invade Nicaragua. Capt Del Rio was released in August 1960 with a number of other pilots, and he remained close-mouthed at the San Antonio Air Base. I tried to question him after his release, but he would tell me nothing.

5. Capt Del Rio reads only English language books on aviation and war, but he speaks very little English. He is extremely dissatisfied with the Castro regime. He became even more incensed with the present Cuban Government when he learned of the arrest of a good friend who was the former Chief of the Rural Police Officers School at San Julian Air Base.

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